

REMARKS

Firstly, Applicant wishes to express her appreciation for the early indication of allowable claims and the courtesies extended to her undersigned Attorney during the telephone interview held September 22, 2003. Claim 1 has been amended above to clarify the invention and distinguish the single cited reference without materially altering the scope of Claim 1 or claims dependent thereon in order to advance prosecution. Support for the folding of the sheet through "approximately 180 degrees" is found in the specification at least on page 15, and in Figures 3A, 3B, 4 and 5. Claim 15 has been amended to correctly indicate dependency upon Claim 14. No new matter is introduced thereby.

Claims 1 to 10, 13 to 15, 17 and 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as anticipated by Fournier's WO 98/52439 (Hereinafter "Fournier"). The Office Action states that Fournier "teaches a multi article carrier comprising a sheet of nylon waterproof material 2 foldable in both the longitudinal and transverse directions, a plurality of compartments 15 to 23 in the location and manner as claimed by applicant, attachment means 12, closure means 25 (see also page 6 lines 17-22, and page 10 lines 12-20 of the specification), handles 7, and adjustable

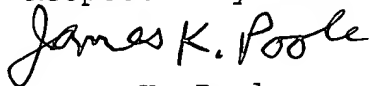
carrying straps 5 (see also claim 8)". However, as stated in the "Summary" beginning on page 5, the "sports bag" comprises a rectangular base and pairs of side and end walls "hingedly connected" to the base, arranged so that in the non-planar configuration the walls "extend upwardly" from the base. The walls are of "flexible material," but the material or properties of the base are unspecified. Given that the bag is intended for carrying hockey gear, the base is likely to have some degree of rigidity rather than being flexible like the walls. Thus, Fournier does not disclose or suggest a "sheet of flexible material" as presently claimed. Although the pockets are disclosed on page 7, line 6 as formed from mesh nylon material, Applicant's Attorney finds no disclosure of the material used for the walls or base. Although the side and walls could hypothetically be folded over the base of Fournier's bag, such an arrangement would neither properly enclose the pockets and their contents nor secure the walls in place and provide carrying means as is the case for the presently claimed invention. When these side and end walls are "extended upwardly" from the base and secured in place, as shown in Figures 1 and 2, they appear to be approximately perpendicular to the base. To make it abundantly clear that the "folding" (even once) of portions of Applicant's carrier differs from such arrangements, Claim 1 has been amended to recite that said folds are "approximately 180 degrees".

In view of the above amendment and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the rejection over Fournier should be withdrawn.

The additional references cited but not applied in a rejection have been reviewed by Applicant and found to come no closer to suggesting the present invention.

It is respectfully submitted that all claims presented are in full condition for allowance, which action is earnestly requested. If any detail appears to stand in the way of immediate allowance of all claims, the Examiner is respectfully invited to contact Applicant's undersigned Attorney so that any remaining issues may be identified and readily resolved via a telephone interview.

Respectfully submitted,



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